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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT,
MONDAY, MAY 24, 2004

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER
THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL
US, UK want immunity for torturers - Aksam
Newsweek: US Attorney General permits torture - Milliyet
5/23
US troops kill 66 in El-Sadr militia - Sabah
Chalabi demands compensation from US - Aksam
Barzani, Talabani want Kurdish PM in new Iraq - Sabah 5/23
US to take home 500 tons of Iraqi uranium - Aksam 5/23
For US, Denktaş is 'former' leader of Turkish Cypriots-
Milliyet
Israeli minister: We are no different from Nazis - Hurriyet
Israeli Defense Min: Sorry, destruction will continue -
Hurriyet
Vorking: World Bank ready to aid 'TRNC' - Turkiye
Former IMF boss becomes Germany's president - Sabah

OPINION MAKERS
Gen. Sanchez involved in torture - Cumhuriyet
Gen. Sanchez a torturer too - Yeni Safak
Wash. Post: US soldiers apply torture 'for fun' - Cumhuriyet
5/23
US Attorney General 'advises' torture - Zaman 5/23
US, UK want to block prosecution of war crimes - Cumhuriyet
US, UK shield torturers - Radikal
Weston: US support for Turkish Cypriots won't be symbolic -
Cumhuriyet
Israeli minister likens Rafah destruction to Nazi action -
Zaman
Israeli snipers hunt Palestinian children - Zaman 5/23
Palestinian Ambassador wants Turkish peacekeepers in
Palestine - Yeni Safak
Turkey's Kurds await implementation of EU reforms - Radikal
NGOs rally in Istanbul against NATO Summit - Radikal 5/23
TOBB warns of possible crisis in Turkey's economy -
Cumhuriyet

BRIEFING

US wants to use Turkey as a 'logistical base': "Cumhuriyet" claims that the US proposed to Turkey the signing of an MOU that would allow increased US military training exercises in Turkey. The paper alleges that the US proposed the MOU as a means to by-pass the necessary approval for such an agreement by the Turkish parliament. According to the article, Turkish support for US military activities in Turkey would continue to be shaped within the framework of existing agreements between Turkey, the US and NATO. The US will deploy 48 warplanes at Incirlik and Konya airbases, according to the MOU. US military personnel would be necessary for maintenance and care of these aircraft, but their presence is not included in the MOU, "Cumhuriyet" reports. The paper further claims that the US wants to establish naval bases at the Black Sea ports of Samsun and Trabzon. The US wants a response from Turkey on these requests before President Bush arrives for his visit in June, the paper claims. The Turkish General Staff (TGS) believes that Turkish support for the US requests will be decided by Turkey's political leadership and would also require parliamentary approval. The duration and limits of the US requests from Turkey are ambiguous, and the TGS believes that such points require clarification. The AK Party government would not want to lose US support,

"Cumhuriyet" claims, and therefore wants to keep the issue away from public scrutiny. The paper claims, however, that the government is inclined to accept the US requests.

TGS warns against AFOSI activities: The Turkish General Staff (TGS) has warned the ministry of interior against alleged intelligence activities being carried out in Giresun province by US Air Force Special Investigations Office (AFOSI) personnel from Incirlik Air Base, "Zaman" reports. The Ministry of Interior has warned provincial administrations to prevent such activities by not meeting with AFOSI officials without prior approval from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Interior Ministry has also ordered provincial officials not to allow US personnel to carry weapons outside their military facilities.

Cyprus: US Ambassador to Cyprus Michael Klossen paid a visit to 'TRNC PM' Mehmet Ali Talat in the Turkish part of Nicosia, weekend papers report. Klossen said the US has been working on a package of measures to help end the international isolation of the Turkish Cypriots. He also said the US is working to upgrade its office in northern Cyprus. Papers also report US Special Cyprus Coordinator Tom Weston's description of Talat as the leader of the Turkish Cypriots. Weston reportedly referred to Rauf Denktas as the 'former' leader. Sunday's "Milliyet" notes that US Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta will visit Turkey to discuss security measures at Turkish airports and along the Bosphorus in advance of the NATO Summit in June. Turkey's Transportation Minister Yildirim is expected to ask Mineta to begin direct US flights from Washington to northern Cyprus. Meanwhile, FM Gul said over the weekend that Ankara opposed the idea of holding early elections in northern Cyprus.

Israel-Palestine: "Cumhuriyet" interprets recent strong statements by Turkish PM Erdogan and FM Gul criticizing Israeli military operations in Gaza as an indication of growing tension between Turkey and Israel. Intensified Israeli violence has forced Ankara to increase its support to Palestine, "Cumhuriyet" claims. Parliamentary Speaker Bulent Arinc condemned the Israeli attacks in the Rafah refugee camp as 'acts of brutality.' Arinc also argued that the US shares responsibility for the bloodshed in Palestine. The Turkish parliament will discuss Israel's operations against Palestinians in a general session on Tuesday. Meanwhile, Israeli Minister of Infrastructure Joseph Paritzki will visit Ankara unofficially on Tuesday for the signing of cooperation agreements between Turkish and Israeli companies, "Cumhuriyet" reports.

Putin due in Turkey; PM Erdogan to visit Iran: Russian President Vladimir Putin will be in Turkey for the NATO Summit in Istanbul June 28-29 and then proceed to Ankara June 30 for the first official visit by a Russian President since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The sides will discuss bilateral relations, Iraq, and Cyprus. Meanwhile, FM Gul reportedly told that Iranian News Agency IRNA over the weekend that PM Erdogan would soon pay an official visit to Iran within the context of an effort to enhance ties with Islamic countries. Iranian President Khatami will also visit Turkey as the official guest of Turkish President Sezer, Gul noted.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Iraq; India

"The Chaos in Iraq Might Spread to Turkey" Cuneyt Ulsever wrote in the mass appeal Hurriyet (5/24): "Campaigning for a complete withdrawal of US forces from the region is the right instinct, but is essentially an emotional reaction. We need to recognize what would happen after the US withdrawal -- namely, a disaster for Turkey. A more reasonable approach to the issue requires a number of elements. First, the US should admit the fact that it cannot possibly rule this region alone. The US should be willing to share control of the oil with Russia, China, France and Germany. Overall control of the region should be transferred to the United Nations. If that happens, Turkey and the United Kingdom will be able to share and implement their experiences in the fight against terrorism. Under such circumstances, the US will be able to focus on controlling the oil regions. As for Turkey, we should be prepared for a federal Kurdish state. If these elements are ignored, the chaos in Iraq might turn into a nightmare for the whole region, including for Turkey."

"Why Chalabi?" Asli Aydintasbas filed this from Washington in the mass appeal Sabah (5/24): "The Bush administration has managed to

come up with an excuse for all of its failings in Iraq. The current treatment of Ahmad Chalabi and the strong campaign against him looks like the treatment of the enemies of communism during the Stalin era. The Republicans seem happy for having found a scapegoat, and Chalabi is now being charged with every possible sin. . If you read the pro-government press, Ahmad Chalabi is the worst man in the Middle East. Yet a high level Pentagon official describes Chalabi as 'a genuine democrat and friend of America.' Whatever the truth is, it is rather sad to see the US effort to bring democracy to Iraq has come to a point where its opponents are silenced by force. Washington has turned into a beast eating its own children. The democrats in Iraq are the first victims."

"Sacrifice or Lack of Experience"

Zafer Atay commented in the economic-political Dunya (5/24): "Despite the election victory of India's Congress Party, Sonja Gandhi announced at the last minute her decision not to stand for the position of Prime Minister. Before the elections, no one guessed that Vajpayee would lose. His party was leading in every opinion poll. Some believe that Sonja Gandhi has sacrificed her political ambitions in an effort to avoid chaos in the country. Others believe that Mrs. Gandhi is just an amateur politician. Although she lived in the most important political family in India for years, Mrs. Gandhi apparently learned very little from them. She has neither her husband's charisma nor her mother-in-law's determination. In fact, there are allegations that her newly elected deputy son Rahul and future Congress Party future leader Priyanka, Mrs. Gandhi's daughter, pressured their mother to withdraw based on concerns for her physical security. Although India is the world's largest democracy, political intrigue continues to hamper the democratic process. Meanwhile, the prediction Nostradamus made centuries ago has not been realized: the possibility that an Italian would someday rule India has disappeared, at least for the moment."

EDELMAN